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SENSITIVE
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SUBJECT: MULTICULTURAL POLICING WORKSHOP ADDRESSES
ANTI-ROMA VIOLENCE

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11. (SBU) Summary. As part of Post's continuing tolerance program, Post, the Hungarian Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and the FBI's International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) jointly conducted a two-day workshop in Budapest for senior police officials, prosecutors, and judges on policing in multi-cultural society. Hungarian NGOs and international speakers shared their insights and best practices, while the MOJ presented case studies and conducted practical exercises.

Our effort responds to a request from Foreign Minister Balasz to Secretary Clinton for assistance in improving minority policing. We are studying further ways to help address this problem. End Summary.

BACKGROUND: ESCALATING ANTI-ROMA VIOLENCE

12. (SBU) Deteriorating economic conditions have acerbated tensions with and violence against the minority Roma population. The most serious case earlier this year involved a series of arson attacks and shootings that left seven Roma dead (ref A). The extreme-right Jobbik party has claimed that the police are too weak to protect Hungarians from "Gypsy Crime," and have offered the para-military Magyar Garda as an alternative. At the same time, some Roma have started self-defense patrols of their settlements. Police and judges are grappling with the situation and the overall increase of tension surrounding law enforcement issues. FBI help in solving the Roma serial killings has made the MOJ more open to our offers of assistance.

THE GOAL: INTRODUCING MULTICULTURAL POLICING CONCEPTS

13. (U) Post and the MOJ jointly sponsored a December 2-3 workshop on policing in a multi-cultural environment at ILEA Budapest. The target audience was forty Hungarian senior-level police officers (Budapest District Commanders and Deputy County Commissioners from outside of Budapest) and ten prosecutors and judges. They joined representatives from the United States, Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands to examine the motivation behind and how to investigate hate crimes. Drawing parallels between the current situation of minorities in Hungary and similar conditions in other countries, the workshop introduced participants to available

resources and experts on human rights, hate crimes investigations, and community policing, providing a forum for participants to share issues of concern and best practices.

¶14. (SBU) NGO speakers detailed the social and legal discrimination Roma face, and offered tools and training to support police efforts. The Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC) presented research results on the inefficiency of disproportionate identification checks for Roma. HHC claimed that though Roma are stopped three times more often than non-Roma, there was no significant difference between Roma and non-Roma in terms of arrests or convictions. The Open Society explained that crime goes unreported when minorities fear the police. The Roma Police Association stressed that a strong minority presence on the police force could help reduce personal prejudices of officers and strengthen community outreach programs to the Roma.

¶15. (SBU) The U.S., Canadian, and British experts shared multi-ethnic policing examples. The Head of the FBI Hate Crimes Division explained U.S. law, and detailed recent hate crimes cases. The Head of the London Police Diversity Unit and the Canadian professor of criminology provided examples of community outreach programs and minority hiring practices.

The response was extremely positive. The participants were actively engaged throughout, and there were indications that we succeeded in broadening police and judicial thinking on how best to work in a multi-cultural society. Post-workshop student surveys recommended that future workshops include more concrete examples and practical hands-on training.

COMMENT

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¶16. (SBU) We note that Foreign Minister Balasz asked Secretary Clinton in October for U.S. help in improving minority policing efforts and Prime Minister Bajnai subsequently raised the issue with Vice President Biden during their December 4 meeting. We strongly believe that additional follow-on practical training would achieve important results in both the police and the judiciary, and are examining with our ILEA counterparts ways to build upon our initial workshop. We are still awaiting a response to our request for a Prime Minister's Office point of contact to coordinate this initiative and other Roma-related programs.

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